

Reference is made to the following publications:

D1 : EP 0 432 639 A (FRAUNHOFER-GESELLSCHAFT ZUR FOERDERUNG DER ANGEWANDTEN FORSCHUNG E.V) 19 June 1991 (1991-06-19) mentioned in the application

1 The document D1 (Fig. 1) is regarded as the closest prior art. It discloses all the features of the preamble of Claim 1, in other words:

a device (1) for equalizing the charge of the serially connected capacitors (2) belonging to a double layer capacitor (11), with each capacitor being assigned a single transformer (27) in each case whose secondary winding (31) is connected by way of a single diode (30) to the positive terminal of the capacitor and directly to the negative terminal, and to a voltage comparator.

1.1 The subject matter of the independent Claim 1 differs from the document D1 in all the features of the characterizing part.

1.1.1 The subject matter of Claim 1 is thus novel (Article 33 (2) PCT).

1.2 The object to be achieved by the present invention can thus be seen to consist in: achieving a charge equalization with a low level of engineering effort.

1.2.1 Although the person skilled in the art could recognize the object, in D1 he will find no reason to make use of all the features of the characterizing part of Claim 1 in order to achieve the aforementioned object.

The person skilled in the art would therefore not achieve the object of Claim 1 without inventive assistance (Article 33(3)).

Claim 1 thus likewise fulfills the requirements of the PCT in respect of inventive step (Article 33(2)).

1.3 Mutatis mutandis the method for operating the device according to Claim 1, as described in Claim 7, is also novel and inventive. Independent Claim 7 thus likewise fulfills the requirements of Articles 33(2) and 33(3) of the PCT.

2        Claims 2-6 and 8-10 are dependent on Claim 1 and Claim 7 respectively and thus likewise fulfill the requirements of the PCT in respect of novelty and inventive step.

3        As the device according to Claim 1 and the method according to Claim 7 can be used in motor vehicles, Claims 1 and 7 therefore also fulfill the requirements of the PCT in respect of industrial application (Article 33(4) PCT).

The dependent Claims 2-6, 8-10 thus likewise fulfill the requirements of the PCT in respect of industrial application (Article 33(4) PCT).